

**From:** Joe Frost <jwfrost01@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 27, 2016 9:08 AM  
**To:** Rep. Lee Chatfield (District 107); Mary Lou Terrien  
**Subject:** HB 5232

Dear Mr. Chair,

Later this afternoon, you will hear testimony regarding **HB 5232 History and arts; other; procedure to establish a local historic district**; As you know, this Bill proposes serious changes to the existing PA 169 of 1970.

Historic districts are often perceived as a threat to progress, but I want to remind you, and your committee, of the positive benefits of historic districts, historic designations, and historic preservation in general. In your home district, historic preservation is a positive underlying element of the local tourism economy. Places like Mackinac Island and Bay View, with their stunning historic character, and wealth of historic resources exemplify the great heritage of Michigan. Studies abound as to the positive effects of historic districts. According to economist Donovan Rypkema, local historic districts create jobs and increase property values.

Much of the proposed amendments to PA 169 of 1970 will have adverse affects on historic districts, and namely the ability to efficiently designate historic districts. One item in particular, is the clause to renew, by vote, a historic district every ten years. The logic here makes no sense, and establishes a dangerous precedent.

In ten years time historic buildings, become older, in many ways an effective historic district's character will be enhanced over the course of a decade. Consider, **Would the Legislature propose a ten year renewal process for Zoning?...No.** Historic districts are essentially a form a zoning. It's an approach that enables a community the ability to preserve and enhance districts that have meaningful historic and architectural character. **If anything, local historic districts should become easier to establish, not harder.**

I am a historic preservation professional. I currently serve as the Executive Director of the Oxford Downtown Development Authority. Prior to returning to Michigan, I served as a Community Preservation Specialist for Indiana Landmarks, where I worked directly with local historic commissions in that State. I am happy to answer any questions you may have, and be a resource to you.

Thank you for your time, and the opportunity to advocate for historic preservation.

Regards,

Joe Frost

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